
From: DOnofrio, Cris
To: Mosher, Eric; Pane, Mark
CC: Rotola, Joe; Jimenez, Christopher; Wilson, Eric; Hoppe, Shawna K; Garrison, Geoffrey; Mugdan, Walter; Carpenter, Angela
Sent: 3/21/2015 2:19:37 PM
Subject: RE: Potential Methyl Bromide Release in St. John's

All:

I just got off the phone with Geoff Garrison a few moments ago. Geoff and I have been coordinating our efforts all morning to obtain technical and situational information in order to support a response as needed. Geoff has been in contact with the VI DPNR Commissioner and is on his way to St. John to assist DPNR in the investigation of this incident. The RST contractor is not being mobilized at this time. The following is a summary of what is currently known and the proposed actions:

A family of four was staying at La Sirena Villa, a relatively new condominium in Coral Bay, St. John. They began their stay approximately 5 days ago and slowly started showing neurological symptoms of chemical exposure. Last night their symptoms worsened to the point they required medical care. They are currently in the St. Thomas Hospital where at least two members of the family have been hospitalized; the details of their current condition are not known at this time. The suspected chemical is methyl bromide.

DPNR has informed Geoff Garrison that DPNR has been in contact with the exterminator for the condominium. The exterminator has confirmed that methyl bromide has been applied to the condominium unit in question. The amount used, method of application, and the timing of the application have not yet been confirmed. It is also not known whether other condominium units have been similarly treated. Geoff is on his way to St. Thomas/St. John to assist DPNR in the investigation and potential sampling of the condominium unit(s). He is expected to arrive on St. Thomas at 16:00 hours today.

I have been coordinating with ERT and Mike Matarazzo on technical and health and safety issues. With the latest information, we have identified sampling equipment and methodologies to be used if needed. ERT is preparing to ship SUMMA canisters, sampling pumps and associated sampling media to St. Thomas in the event sampling is required. We are trying to stay ahead of the incident by sending the appropriate sampling equipment today, however; the equipment may not be ready in time for the last Federal Express shipment of the day. In that event, it will be shipped on Monday morning for overnight delivery. Once Geoff arrives on St. John and can obtain additional details, we will evaluate the need for ERT/SERAS/RST personnel to hand carry equipment on a plane on Sunday or Monday, depending on the urgency/need for sampling.

From: Mosher, Eric

Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2015 10:26 AM

To: Pane, Mark

Cc: Rotola, Joe; Jimenez, Christopher; Wilson, Eric; Hoppe, Shawna K; DOnofrio, Cris; Garrison, Geoffrey; Mugdan, Walter; Carpenter, Angela

Subject: Re: Potential Methyl Bromide Release in St. John's

Thanks much. Cris is talking with Geoff to get an assessment done. We should move quickly on this so we are going to ask for a verbal at the same time in case Geoff decides to mobilize resources for an action.

Regards,
Eric

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 20, 2015, at 5:39 PM, Pane, Mark <Pane.Mark@epa.gov> wrote:

All,

I am passing this very limited information on to you, because it may be active over the weekend. Eric Wilson and I just received a call from Geoff Garrison regarding a potential exposure of 3 individuals to methyl bromide which resulted in their hospitalization. The exposure likely occurred at the resident's condominium in St. Johns. The residents are now hospitalized in St. Thomas where the doctor examining them has diagnosed them with symptoms consistent with methyl bromide exposure. Methyl bromide is pesticide, see google search below. The call was relayed to Geoff directly from the RA, who requested an immediate EPA presence to assist local authorities in addressing this situation. I contacted Patrick Ahern, RST on call person, to coordinate their resources. Geoff is trying to collect additional

information from a family friend of the hospitalized residents. Geoff believes that we should conduct an entry into the residence, possibly in level B or C PPE to locate the source of this material. Also, we need to canvass the surrounding area to determine if others have been impacted.

I am copying all of the players I believe need to be notified, but if omitted anyone, please pass this information along. I believe Margaret Gregor is the after hours responder for this weekend. I apologize for the lack of detail, but that is all I have right now. Please feel free to call me on my cell or at home with any questions.

Thank you,

Mark P. Pane

Chief, Removal Support Section

Removal Action Branch

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Some info on Methyl Bromide:

Humans

- Human experience and use history indicate that inhalation exposure to methyl bromide is highly toxic (1). Methyl bromide is corrosive to both the skin and eyes (1).
- The symptoms associated with methyl bromide poisoning may include headaches, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances, malaise, confusion, loss of coordination, slurred speech, and skin, eye, and respiratory irritation (2, 8, 18, 19). In severe poisonings, paralysis, convulsions, coma, and death may occur (2, 8, 18, 19). Signs of methyl bromide poisoning are often delayed and may lag from only a few minutes to 48 hours post exposure (2, 8, 19).
- Researchers have suggested that low-level, chronic exposure to methyl bromide affects the nervous system, but the evidence supporting chronic toxicity is inconclusive (2, 19, 20, 21).